

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01 ABF-01 AGRE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 EB-08 EPA-01 HEW-04 HUD-01 INT-05 LOC-01

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NSF FOR CZIESLA

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TAGS: TGEN, TPHY, IN

SUBJECT: REORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC
AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR)

1. ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE, THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR) IS BEING REORGANIZED. A NUMBER OF NATIONAL LABORATORIES WHOSE WORK IS LARGELY RELATABLE TO A SINGLE MINISTRY OR UNDERTAKING WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE USER MINISTRIES OR UNDERTAKINGS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND USERS BUT THE AUTONOMOUS CHARACTER OF THE LABORATORIES WILL BE RETAINED. THE GOI WILL EVALUATE THIS REORGANIZATION AT A LATER DATE TO DETERMINE ITS SUCCESS. NEWSPAPERS SPECULATE THAT AS MANY AS 28 OF THE 44 NATIONAL LABORATORIES ARE EXPECTED TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE CSIR FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE REMAINDER WHICH DO NOT FIT CONVENIENTLY INTO OTHER MINISTRIES WILL BE RETAINED BY CSIR, WHICH IS NOW HEADED BY DR. ARCOT RAMACHANDRAN, SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DST).

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FULL DETAILS OF THE REORGANIZATION HAVE YET TO BE WORKED OUT. SENIOR CSIR SCIENTISTS STATED THAT THIS MOVE "WOULD MARK THE END OF AUTONOMY WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE RESEARCH". SOME OF THE SCIENCE COMMUNITY FEELS THAT THE REORGANIZATION WAS DONE WITHOUT PRIOR DISCUSSION WITH THEM.

2. COMMENT: PRESS COVERAGE OF THE MOVE HAS TAKEN THE LINE

THAT THE REORGANIZATION REPRESENTS A VICTORY OF THOSE WHO FAVOR HEAVIER RELIANCE ON INDIA'S OWN SCIENTIFIC WORK. IN OUR VIEW, THIS DISTINCTION IS PROBABLY OVERDRAWN, ALTHOUGH DR. ATMA RAM, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HAS IN THE PAST FAVORED MAKING USE OF RE-SEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY FROM ALL SOURCES, AND INTERNAL RIVAL-RIES HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN THE REORGANIZATION.

3. UNTIL NOW, THERE HAD BEEN A CENTRALIZED AGENCY AT THE CSIR HEADQUARTERS WHICH FACILITATED FOREIGN INTERACTION INCLUDING APPROVAL OF SFCP PROJECTS. ACCORDING TO DR. R. DESHPANDE, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION, DST, THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF CSIR WILL NOW BE DISBANDED. THE EXTENT OF FOREIGN COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS WITH LABORATORIES TRANSFERRED AWAY FROM CSIR CONTROL WILL DEPEND ON THE POLICY OF THE USER MINISTRY. DESHPANDE INDICATES THAT INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH ALL CSIR LABORATORIES - INCLUDING THOSE TRANSFERRED TO USER MINISTRIES - WILL BE HANDLED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. DST WILL ALSO TAKE OVER THE HANDLING OF THE SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH NSF. THIS DESHPANDE FEELS WILL BROADEN THE SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE SCIENTISTS FROM UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS BESIDES CSIR LABORATORIES. END COMMENT.
GOHEEN

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